

NOTES AND NEWS.

EMILE OUSTALET, a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, died on the 23d of October, 1905, at Saint Cast (Côtes du Nord), France, in the 61st year of his age. He was the most eminent of recent French ornithologists. He was born in Montbeliard, Department of Doubs, on the 24th of August, 1844. After completing his studies at the Lycéeum he devoted himself to the study of natural history at the Ecole des Hautes-Etudes in Paris. His first scientific publications related to the organs of respiration in the larvæ of Neuroptera and to the fossil insects of France. In the year 1873 he succeeded Jules Verreaux at the Paris Museum of Natural History, and from this time on devoted himself exclusively to the study of ornithology. The rich collections received from the French missionaries in China, and from the French colonies in Indo-China and Africa especially engaged his attention, and eventually he became admittedly the highest authority on the birds of China. Upon the death of Alphonse Milne-Edwards, in 1900, he became his successor at the Muséum and was appointed to the chair of Mammalogy and Ornithology, which position he held till his death.

In June of last year he attended the International Ornithological Congress held in London, and few of the ornithologists who then had the pleasure of meeting the great French scholar could have anticipated, as said by Hellmayr, in his recent biographical notice of Oustelet (*Ornithol. Monatsberichte*, XIV, No. 1, April, 1906, pp. 57-59, to which we are indebted for many of the facts here presented), that "a few months later the earth would close over his mortal remains." Although his health was far from satisfactory, the news of his death came as a great surprise. The last days of his life were unspeakably painful and death was a release. He was interred in his native city on the 29th of October.

A list of Oustelet's scientific publications was issued by Jules Rousset in 1900, in a special brochure, wherein 143 titles were enumerated, by far the greater part being ornithological. Among his more important works may be mentioned the following: 'Les Oiseaux de la Chine' (with Père Armand David), published in 1877; 'Etude sur la faune ornithologique des îles Seychelles,' in 1877-1878; 'Monographie des Oiseaux de la famille des Megapodiidés,' in two parts, 1880, 1881; 'Etudes sur les Mammifères et les Oiseaux des îles Comores,' 1888; 'Mission scientifique du Cap Horn, 1882-1883, Oiseaux,' 1891; 'Catalogue des Oiseaux provenant du voyage de N. Bonvalot et du Prince Henrie d'Orleans, à travers le Turkestan, le Tibet et la Chine occidentale,' 1893-1894; 'Les Mammifères et les Oiseaux des îles Mariannes,' 1895-1896; 'Notice sur la faune ornithologique ancienne et moderne des îles Mascareignes et en particulier de l'île Maurice,' 1897; 'Les Oiseaux du Cambodge, du Laos, de l'Annam et du Tonkin,' 1899. In addition to these larger works were many important papers in various scientific journals.

Oustelet was president of the third International Ornithological Congress held in Paris in 1900; he was also a corresponding member of the British Ornithologists' Union, the American Ornithologists' Union, the London Zoölogical Society, and honorary member of many French and foreign natural history societies, and of course many species were named in his honor. It also fell to his lot to describe many remarkable forms of bird life.

VICTOR FATIO, a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at his home in Geneva, Switzerland, March 19, 1906, at the age of 67 years. A notice of his life and labors will appear in a later number of this journal.

GEORGE F. BRENINGER, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union, and widely known as a collector and taxidermist, died at his home in Phoenix, Arizona, December 3, 1905, of arsenical poisoning acquired in the preparation of specimens. Mr. Breninger had recently been in the employ of the Field Museum of Natural History, and for some years past was a frequent contributor to 'The Auk,' 'The Condor,' 'The Osprey,' and other ornithological publications. He had collected extensively in Arizona, Mexico, and California. A paper in 'The Auk' (XXI, 1904, pp. 218-223), giving an account of 'San Clemente Island and its Birds,' is based on his experiences there as a collector for the Field Columbian Museum.

LA RUE K. HOLMES, an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at his home in Summit, New Jersey, May 10, 1906, in the 24th year of his age. He was the only son of Colonel B. P. and Georgiana K. Holmes, and was born at Summit, December 28, 1883. As a boy he early developed a strong interest in natural history, and later became passionately fond of the study of birds. Besides his association with the American Ornithologists' Union, he was a Corresponding Member of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, and contributed to 'Cassinia' for 1904 a carefully prepared paper on 'The Short-billed Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus stellaris*) in Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey' (*l. c.*, pp. 17-25). For several months in 1905 he was employed in the American Museum of Natural History as an assistant in the department of ornithology. He was a careful field observer, and gave promise of much efficiency as an ornithologist. His death was due primarily to an attack of pneumonia.

MR. J. H. BATTY, for the last three and a half years a collector of natural history specimens, chiefly birds and mammals, for the American Museum of Natural History, was killed instantly by the accidental discharge of his gun while collecting near Pijijiapam, in the southern part of the State of Chiapas, Mexico, on May 26, 1906. Previously he had collected extensively in the province of Chiriqui, Panama, and in the Cauca region of

Colombia. These collections also now belong in great part to the American Museum, acquired partly by purchase and partly as a gift from Mr. Batty.

Mr. Batty was born about sixty years ago at Springfield, Mass., where he received a high school education and fitted for college, but out-of-door pursuits and a fondness for adventure led him to early abandon his college course. He had a great fondness for natural history, and in 1873 was a collector of birds and mammals in the mountains of Colorado for the Hayden Survey. For many years he was in business as a taxidermist in New York City, and published a book on 'Taxidermy and Home Decoration' which has had extensive sale. Later he engaged in plume hunting, in the early days of that unfortunate business, for this purpose visiting Florida, western Mexico, Central America, and northern South America, which continent he traversed from ocean to ocean. For the last eight years he was engaged in legitimate natural history collecting, and secured many new species in Colombia and Panama, before his formal engagement by the American Museum. He was an expert hunter, and unusually successful in capturing the larger Carnivores. He was a man of great physical endurance, courage, persistency, and enthusiasm, and was probably familiar with a larger portion of the wilds of tropical America than any other traveller or explorer. During the last three years he has collected extensively in the States of Durango, Sinaloa, Jalisco, and Chiapas, Mexico, he having sent over 3000 mammals and about 6000 birds to the New York Museum as the result of his labors. At the time of his death he was under contract with this institution to continue his work across Guatemala to the Pacific coast, and thence transfer his field of operations to the still very imperfectly explored regions of southwestern Colombia. His untimely death is thus a serious loss to the institution he has served so faithfully. Personally he was a man of the most kindly nature, trustful, and thoroughly conscientious in his work.

FRANK J. THOMPSON, formerly (1885-1896) an Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union, died in Culpepper, Va., his place of birth, May 29, at the age of 79 years. Mr. Thompson was a practical naturalist, and traveled extensively in the Old World tropics as a collector of living wild animals for zoölogical gardens. As stated in 'Forest and Stream' (of June 16, 1906): "Mr. Thompson was so well known as being better acquainted with wild animals than anyone else that he was appointed the first superintendent of the Zoölogical Garden of Philadelphia, having been summoned to take that place while traveling in Australia. Subsequently he became superintendent of the Zoölogical Gardens in Cincinnati and in Buffalo. Perhaps no other man ever had so great an experience with the wild game of the tropical world at large, and with his hunting experience was mingled a knowledge of the life-habits of these animals, which, if written out, would make the adventures of a multitude of famous book writers of these later days seem insignificant. Mr. Thompson had been a contributor to 'Forest

and Stream' for a period of more than thirty years. His writings covered a wide range of subject . . . Personally Mr. Thompson was a man of gigantic frame and force, but of a nature so kindly and benevolent as to endear him to all with whom he was brought in contact."

It is a pleasure to learn that in the recent disaster to San Francisco and vicinity from earthquake and fire most of the large private collections of birds escaped practically unharmed, and that the natural history collections of Stanford University and the University of California suffered very little loss. The building of the California Academy of Sciences, however, was destroyed, with practically all its contents, except the types in the herbarium and a few others, saved through the thoughtfulness and courage of Miss Alice Eastwood, who entered the wrecked building and secured their removal before the fire reached it. The total destruction of this building with its rich contents is a great loss to science in general, and especially to Pacific Coast ornithology. "This collection," says 'The Condor' (May-June, 1906, p. 78), numbering in the neighborhood of 25,000 specimens, was unique in its extensive series of superbly prepared skins of sea-birds. The accumulation and study of these had long been the devoted aim of the Director of the Academy, Leverett M. Loomis. Another most deplorable feature of the disaster was the destruction of the valuable library, the ornithological portion of which contained many rare and expensive sets, such as complete files of 'The Ibis' and 'Journal für Ornithologie. . . There is now practically no library on the Pacific Coast suitable for extended research reference in ornithology. However, the Academy's endowment remains, together with the insurance on the burned buildings, so that we may gradually look for the institution to gradually regain its scientific importance." Later information states that the rehabilitation of the Academy has already been entered upon with the promptness and energy that has characterized the people of the stricken city along every line of enterprise.

WE LEARN from 'The Emu' (V, April, 1906, pp. 201, 202) that the 'cat question' is already a serious problem with bird protectionists in Australia. Mr. A. G. Campbell, one of the Hon. Editors of 'The Emu,' in writing of "the wild-cat pest — *i. e.*, the domestic cat gone wild," thus refers to the subject: "These injurious animals are now practically all over Australia. You find them on the shores prowling about sea-bird rookeries, and in the far interior thriving in rabbit-burrows. They are even to be found numerous upon the islands off the coast. After several generations in the bush-wilds these animals attain an immense size, and become so fierce that they have been known to attack human beings. Now, such great beasts need a quantity of food, and of what does that food chiefly consist? Why, of course, native birds and animals.

"How are we to combat this evil? 'It is a fine day; let us go out and kill something.' That is a Frenchman's view of the chief characteristic

of a Britisher. Well, if we must kill something, let us go out and kill cats. I do not mean our hearth-rug pets, but wild domestic cats in the bush. It would be keen sport hunting cats with rifle and dogs — if not too rough on dogs, judging by the size and spitefulness of some of the 'Toms' I have encountered. As is done in the case of foxes and wild dogs, let rewards be paid for cat-scalps.

"This suggests the ways and means — the only reasonable course begin that of a cat-tax. A collection of, say, one shilling per annum from owners of tame domestic cats would yield a sufficient fund to combat and keep in check the wild-cat nuisance in the country, and thus give our beloved birds a chance for existence.

"These few hasty thoughts are offered in order to create discussion on a subject which has been uppermost in my mind for some years regarding bird protection. Undoubtedly, if many of our highly interesting and beautiful birds, especially ground-loving species, are to be preserved from total extinction, we must, as a bird-lover's union, at no distant date face squarely a wild-cat destruction scheme."

In this country the licensing of cats, or a cat tax, with responsibility on the part of the owners of cats for their acts, and also for their welfare, has already become a public question, in respect to which decisive action cannot be taken too quickly. The extent of the destruction of young birds by even the pet cats of the household in country and suburban districts is appalling. A friend of both birds and cats has informed us of his method of lessening the evil; viz., to keep a close watch for the young birds as they leave their nests in his grounds, and gather up the helpless fledglings and place them in deep baskets and suspend the baskets from the lower branches of trees, where, inaccessible to cats, the old birds will continue to care for them, and when the young birds are strong enough to get out of the basket they are fairly well prepared to keep out of the reach of cats.

A NEW bird book, 'The Birds of Washington,' by William Leon Dawson, assisted by J. H. Bowles, is announced by the Occidental Publishing Company of Seattle, Wash., to appear December 1, 1907. The work will be in two volumes, and issued in several editions, varying in price according to the binding. It is announced to be "a complete, popular and scientific treatise on the birds of the State of Washington," and to contain "concise and accurate descriptions of plumages, nesting, range, etc., based so far as possible upon an original study of Washington material."

A WORK on the 'Nesting Ways of North American Birds' is in preparation by the Rev. P. B. Peabody, of Newcastle, Wyoming. From a letter by the compiler to 'The Condor' (May-June, 1906, pp. 78, 79), we quote as follows: "The scope of the work is the whole field of nesting habits, save for considerations of shapes, colors, sizes and textures of eggs; this portion of the field being already fairly well covered. Everything available in

print has now been drawn upon except the great files of bulletins and proceedings which are to be found only in the larger city libraries; and not, by any means, in even all of these. The work now being done is in this direction, and it is a work both laborious and costly.

"In the preparation of large masses of material, never as yet adequately found in print, the Preparator of the proposed book has enjoyed the generous help of just forty bird students and field workers. Of these, twenty-five are men of national reputation in this domain. When this work is ready for the press, the student who shall look to it for information concerning times, places, number of eggs, nesting conditions and distinctive habits of birds during the nesting season may confidently look to find, in 'Nesting Ways,' the vital facts, so far as known, for all North American birds. Here, in reasonably brief space, he will readily find through careful lists and indexes that which would cost him no less than two hundred dollars, if bought in original form, and which would involve, even then, literally months of perplexing and wearisome research. The illustrations will be full, and wholly original. A large number of the subjects portrayed have never before been photographed; and there will be found in this work not a few facts that are absolutely new to science.

"The book in question, incubating in the Preparator's mind for many years, has not been undertaken with any thought of personal gain. Prepared, throughout, with a view to the needs of the great host of younger bird students, the convenience of the scientific student has been as carefully borne in mind. And every possible effort will be made to keep the price of the work within the scope of humble purses."

In this connection the author makes an appeal for full and authentic data concerning the nesting of some thirty to forty species of birds, mostly West Coast forms, a list of which he presents, and states that credit will be given for any aid rendered.

SOME years since, Otmar Reiser, curator of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Laudesmuseum in Sarajevo, began the publication of his 'Materialien zu einer Ornithologie der Balkanica,' of which Volume II, 'Bulgarien und Ost-Rumilien,' appeared in 1894, and Volume IV, 'Montenegro,' in 1896. After a lapse of ten years, Volume III, 'Griechenland und die griechischen Inseln (mit Ausnahme von Kreta),' is announced to appear in 1906, and Volume V, 'Serbie,' in 1907, to be followed soon after by Volume I, 'Bosnia-Herzegovina,' completing the work, which is published by Adolf Holzhausen, Vienna. Each volume in large octavo, illustrated with both colored and plain plates and a map of the region treated.